

United Equals Unstoppable

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Summary: One-shot set during the climax. Why did Judy really tell Nick to go on without her? How did they come up with their plan? Whose idea was it? How did Nick feel about it? What did it teach them both? This scene answers all those questions. Nick/Judy assumed but contains nothing overtly romantic.

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Artistic License Warning: ****This scene takes up a lot more time than the few seconds Nick and Judy hide in the museum in the film, but they logically would have needed more than a few seconds to come up with their plan, so I've always figured there must have been a time lapse there, that it took the villains a longer time to find them than we see.

* * *

><p>What a waste of perfectly good blueberries â€" Judy could already tell it was going to take a lot more than that bandana to get her leg in working order. She was as doomed as if she had impaled herself on that tusk â€" her muscle was useless. Her leg, her species' most powerful weapon, had never been in this much pain, even on her most grueling days of training. There was no way she was getting out of this museum. Not before her hunters caught up with her.<p>

"Come on out, Judyâ€|"

The irony of the situation must have been what made it hard to be as terrified as she ought to be. If she had ever pictured the possible ways she could die in the field, this â€" crouching in the dark corner of a deserted museum, stalked by a psychotic ewe â€" would not have been on the list. Was it really going to end like this? Judy couldn't imagine any alternative. Nick couldn't carry a fully-grown rabbit _and_ move fast enough to outrun those rams. Any minute now,

Bellwether and her cronies would find the two of them; when they found her and Nick, they would kill them " they had no choice. Would they do it immediately, right here? How? She hadn't seen them carrying any weapons. She desperately hoped they didn't have any more serum or pellet guns, but what did that matter? Once they caught them, they'd get the case and the weapon inside. Maybe if she was lucky, all they would do was kill her" but, no, they couldn't have a bunny go savage, or it would ruin their campaign. At least she was safe from that fate"

In an instant, the most horrifying image she had ever seen seared through her mind. She saw the savage predators they'd found at Cliffside, half-naked, crouching and pacing on all fours behind the glass panes of their cells " their eyes burning with madness, their teeth bared in blind fear and rage, their voices reduced to mindless growls. She saw Nick as one of them " her brave, clever, heroic friend turned into a vicious monster, his reason and memory gone.

All at once, she saw exactly what would happen when the rams caught them. Maybe they couldn't let a rabbit turn up savage, but a fox would have no such protection. Why would they spare a hated predator the worst fate possible? She couldn't let that happen! She had to get Nick out of here!

Thrusting the pain in her leg aside, she shoved the case into Nick's paws. "Take the case. Get it to Bogo," she whispered desperately. She could already picture him refusing to leave her to save himself, but maybe she could convince him to run to save the evidence and the rest of Zootopia.

She might as well have saved her breath. He pushed the case away. "I'm not gonna leave you behind, that's not happening!"

"I can't" walk," she gasped, on the verge of panic as a vision of him losing his mind like Manchas played in her head.

Nick began looking around as if searching for something that could get them out of this. "Just" we'll think of something."

Even he couldn't possibly come up with an ingenious plan that fast! She picked up the case again. "There's no time, Nick. Don't worry about me, just go. Hurry!"

He turned and looked at her as if afraid that she was the one going crazy. "Just let them kill you, are you nuts?!_"

He was going to make her say it, wasn't he? "Yeah, they'll kill me. I'm a bunny, what else can they do? But what do you think they're gonna do to a fox when they get what's in this case?!"

She could tell by the way his eyes widened in horror that the thought truly hadn't occurred to him. Maybe he had been too busy worrying about her. There was no pause, however, before he said, "I don't care"

"I do!" she said in as loud a whisper as she dared, almost before his last word was finished. "I'm not gonna watch them do that to you! I can't!" If they got Nick, Judy knew she'd never forgive herself. She'd dragged him into this in the first place " if anything

happened to him, it would be all her fault!

"They won't!" He seized the case, but her nanosecond of hope was shattered when he didn't run but, in a series of rapid-fire movements, got down on his knees, placed the case on the floor, opened it, and removed the gun. Her ears strained to pick up any sounds of their approaching stalkers as she watched him fumble with the weapon before figuring out how to open it. She shuddered at the sight of the tiny blue capsule that contained a living nightmare waiting to be released as Nick quickly but gingerly removed the pellet and dropped it in his shirt pocket. "There," he whispered as he began speedily returning the pieces of the weapon to their proper places. "Now they can'tâ€¦" He stopped as his eye fell on the blueberries scattered on the floor.

"What?" Judy whispered, confused.

Nick picked up one of the blueberries in one paw and pulled the serum out of his pocket with the other, then held them up side by side. "Same size, same colorâ€¦"

"Fascinating," Judy said, her panic growing by the second. "I'm sure that'll be a big comfort when it ends up in your bloodstream!"

"You're right," said Nick, his voice soft but firm and steady. As he went on, he returned the serum to his pocket, reopened the case, and removed the weapon. "They wouldn't waste a perfect chance to take down another predator. And who do you think they hate more â€" the predator, or their fellow prey?"

Judy, understanding neither the question nor the actions, asked, "What are you getting at?"

He held up the compartment of the gun where the ammo went. "They'll want to get me more than you." He slid three or four blueberries into the gun's ammo slots. They fit perfectly, but what was the point? He continued explaining as he began putting everything back in the case: "I'll run out, drop the case. When they start chasing me, you make a break for it."

"What?!"

Nick gave her a smug grin that clashed with his whisper: "Hey, if I could fool you into thinking I'm a devoted but forgetful single dad, I can fool them into thinking I've gone savage. That should keep 'em busy until you bring back up."

Judy understood it all instantly, but the knowledge didn't comfort her at all. "I'm not going anywhere."

"That wasn't a question."

"No, it's suicide! What if they don't fall for it? What if they have more serum on them? What if they check that the gun's loaded and find blueberries? What if they, crazy thought here, split up and look for me while the others chase you?"

"You better hurry, then."

If pointing out how much danger he would be putting himself in wouldn't work, she'd have to try a different angle. "Even if I make it out, what good is it gonna do? A drop of poison from a flower isn't gonna prove anything!"

"You got a better idea, Carrots?"

_Carrotsâ€| Carrotâ€| Carrot! _Judy's eyes lit up as not a better but an equally wild idea came to her mind. "You still have my pen?"

Nick blinked at the apparent _non sequitur_ but answered, "Your pen? Yeah, I've got it. Maybe, if they let us get close enough, we could stab one of 'em in the eyeâ€|"

She held out her arm. "Give it to me!" When the stunned fox did nothing, she shook her arm and said, "Now!", struggling with all her might to keep her voice down.

Nick handed it over. "I'd say you've got about five to ten seconds to explain."

Judy turned her back on Nick and peered around the corner of the pillar that had been shielding them. Still no sign of their pursuers. Thank God this was such a big museum! She continued scanning for any moving shadows, without turning back around, as she told her partner, "I'm just going along with your plan â€" distracting them by pretending you've gone savage."

"What does that have to do with your pen?"

"It's gonna record everything that goes on. If I could trick you into bragging about your undeclared income, I can trick Bellwether into bragging about her plot. I'll get her to tell us â€" and Bogo and any lawyer, judge, and jury who wants to listen â€" everything."

"How are you gonna do that?" she heard a very perplexed fox ask behind her.

"Easy." Satisfied it was all clear for the moment, Judy turned back to face him with a bright smile. "I'll be right there the whole time."

"What?!"

Still smiling, Judy wagged the pen in her signature pose. "What's the only thing more irresistible than watching a predator you hate go savage? Watching a savage predator you hate kill the only prey you hate."

It took Nick no time to understand what she was getting at. "Noâ€| You're not thinkingâ€|"

Judy's expression hardened as she leaned towards him. "If we split up, they'll split up and catch both of us. If they catch me, they'll kill me. If you don't want that, _you_ have to be the one to do it."

"You seriously expect me toâ€|" Judy didn't interrupt him this time, but Nick didn't finish. He looked sick at the thought of what she was suggesting he do, and she didn't blame him, but this was no time for

squeamishness.

"It's the only way we'll both get out of here alive and sane," she argued.

Nick waved his arms in front of him. "No way, if you think I'm gonnaâ€¦"

Her face turned from stern to pleading. "We can do this, Nick. If you can keep it up, I can keep her talking."

Nick didn't look the slightest bit more convinced. It seemed that having to pretend to hunt her was just too abhorrent for him to consider it an option, no matter how dire the circumstances. "I can't do it. I won't."

"Yes, you can. It's just another hustle."

"What if they catch onto us? If they get me, and you're thereâ€¦"

Judy took pity on him. She reached forward and squeezed his shoulder, stopping him from having to continue that unbearable thought that had occurred to her as well. "I won't let that happen â€" trust me. They won't have time to think about that if we move fast." All they had to do was not give the enemy enough time to consider that their targets might have something on them of just the right size, shape, and color to swap with the serum and therefore find it necessary to check their ammo.

Nick placed both his paws on her shoulders. "That's not what I'm worried about. If they get meâ€¦ if I hurt youâ€¦ I'll neverâ€¦"

"You won't." The force of her last word, despite its softness, made him straighten up slightly. "I trust you."

He stared at her, his eyes moving ever so slightly up and down as if he didn't recognize her and was making sure he knew whom he was talking to. What he said next was, "Then let me handle this." He held out his arm. "Give me the pen."

"Savage mammals can't talk â€" how would you get her to say anything? We have to do this together. That's the only way it'll work."

"You have a back-up plan? What'll you do if they have more serum? If I reallyâ€¦ go savage?"

"I'll figure something out. I'm not afraid."

Nick gasped, his eyes widening even more at the most shocking thing he'd heard today. She hadn't expected that last sentence to have such an impact, but she could tell that the battle was won. "Yeahâ€¦ I can see that." He sounded both resigned and proud.

The sound of a distant voice crooning, "We're on the same team, Judyâ€¦" made them both stiffen up, every nerve and muscle alert to the approaching threat.

Judy clicked the button that turned on the pen's recorder and shoved

it in her pocket out of sight. "That's our cue."

Something on a nearby display caught Nick's eye. He dashed over and grabbed a few things too fast for Judy to identify them. "This should slow them down for a second."

"Don't stop no matter what," Judy reminded him.

He didn't question what she was referring to but merely replied as he worked, "Promise. If it goes wrong, forget about getting the evidence, get as far away as you can."

"Promise." She looked behind her, her nose twitching away, her ears taut with fear. The shadows were slowly closing in; Bellwether's voice was getting louder. Judy gulped and forced herself to say, "If we don't get out of this, Iâ€|"

That was as far as she got. "Oh, no, you don't." His diversion sculpture now finished, Nick pulled her arm over his shoulders, put his arm around her waist, and scurried away as fast as he could, the rabbit limping by his side, both of them trying to ignore the voice echoing behind them ("90% of the population united against a common enemy â€" we'll be unstoppable!"). They were able to take a few cautious steps in silence before the sound of a crash followed by clattering hooves told them their respite was over. There was no more time to talk or strategize as the race for their lives began anew, everything but the task they had set their minds to forgotten.

When it was over, once they saw all the sheep in handcuffs, the pit surrounded by cops, Nick took several deep breaths and rubbed his paw over his neck, as if assuring himself he had been hit by nothing more than a blueberry. Then he turned and gazed intently at Judy, still clinging to his side; even though he knew perfectly well what had happened, he still seemed to need confirmation he hadn't attacked her. "You okay?" he asked her.

She gave him the most encouraging smile she could muster and replied, "I'm fine."

He sighed very weakly in relief, then asked, "I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"No, of course not. You did great." Her tone then changed. "Thanks, Nick. I know you didn't want toâ€| I'm sorry."

Her friend shrugged as his own smile returned. "Ah, no big deal. It's over, and we won."

"Yeah," Judy agreed with a nod. "See? Told ya' we could do it."

"Yeahâ€| we didâ€|"

At that point, Bogo jumped into the exhibit and took Judy in his arms. "If I was still your supervisor, I'd warn you never to pull a stunt like that again, or I'd make you regret it," he said as he handed her off to a rhino standing above them on the edge of the pit.

"I never planned to pull it this time, sir," Judy explained as he and

Nick clambered out of the exhibit, "but we had a last minute emergency."

"Well, I hope you have a good explanation for risking the life of one of my best officers," Bogo said to Judy. He then turned as if he was about to ask Nick something next, but a cry of, "YOU!" made them all turn and face the same direction.

It was Bellwether â€" her wrists cuffed, her arms behind her, held by a hippo. At the sight of Judy and Nick coming to the main floor, she'd begun straining in their direction. "You've ruined everything!"

"You say that like it's a bad thing." Judy slipped out of the officer's arms to the floor, where she let Nick support her right side again. The hippo looked prepared to drag her away, but Bogo held up his hand; he and his new prisoner stayed put.

"How could you do this to me?" the sheep asked Judy. "After everything I did for youâ€|"

"You mean after you used me."

"I was trying to help you. Help all of our kind."

"That's not what you said on here," Judy said with a deliciously wicked grin as she handed Chief Bogo her pen.

"That doesn't prove anything."

"That and this," Nick said as he pulled the stolen pellet of serum from his pocket, "prove everything."

Bellwether glared at him in pure fury. "You think this will change anything, fox?"

Nick's triumphant smile turned into a scowl, but before he could say anything, Judy, her eyes narrowed, her voice low, piped up with, "Leave him alone." She then turned and looked up at Nick. "Let's get outta here."

Nick began leading Judy to the ambulance he could see had pulled up outside, while Bellwether stared at the two of them in a cross between hatred and dismay. "This isn't over," she hissed at them as they walked past.

"Ignore her," Judy instructed her companion. "She doesn't know what she's talking about."

Nick's all-too-familiar grin returned. "Well, she was right about one thing." He turned so that he and Judy were facing their enemy. Bogo and the two officers had paused, as well. "When you're united against a common enemy, you are unstoppable."

End
file.